

CHAT ROOM



JACK MCLAUGHLIN

God'll getcha for that - my life story

Undoubtedly, you've heard the expression, "God'll getcha for that." With me, truer words were never spoken.

When my wife and I were married in 1955, I had a good relationship with her parents who were then considered really old, in their late 60s. Of course anyone at that age in the mid 1950s was really old. Now that I'm 89, I consider this to be mid life!

My father-in-law was terribly hard of hearing and didn't want to wear hearing aids. We had to shout for him to hear us. In looking back, I can't blame him for not wanting to wear one of the monstrosities that passed for hearing aids. We finally got him to buy a \$29.95 model but it was little more than an ineffective amplifier that made all sounds tinny at best.

When my father-in-law came to our house and didn't have his aid plugged in, I would pretend to mouth the words, making him think I was talking. I continued to play out this charade until he put the monstrosity in his ear. Looking back that was really cruel.

A few years later my father-in-law passed on, and because of his loving nature, he is undoubtedly in a place where he can hear the sweet music of harps without his hearing aid. My mother-in-law came to live with us.

She was a nice old lady and we got along except she had one quirk. She'd occasionally complain that ringing and other noises in her ears were exceptionally loud. How could that be? There was nothing around making such sounds. As time went on, she too passed.

God's sense of humor

Now this is where God's sense of humor comes into play. During the Korean War, I served in the Army and was assigned to several anti-aircraft battalions. We trained on guns of all types, big ones that made lots of noise. In those days we didn't use ear protectors. Being young and invincible, we didn't care.

About 10 years after my mother-in-law's passing, my wife began to notice that I was saying, "huh?" a lot. I also began to use my cupped hand to hear more clearly. Shades of my father-in-law! Not long after, I began to hear ringing in my head, like grasshoppers chirping loudly. Other times it sounded like a roaring windstorm or the crackling of a detuned radio.

Extreme hard of hearing and tinnitus is my reward for making fun of my in-laws years earlier. I'm on my third set of hearing aids that now cost \$5,000 a pair. They help me to hear and understand but don't stop the noises in my head. God's sense of humor not only wants me to pay with a handicap, which I so richly deserve, but is hitting my pocketbook as well. A lesson well deserved and learned.

Several years ago a longtime friend was in an auto accident that left her with a bad hip and back problem. It took her many years to recover from this and for a long while she walked with a cane. I often noted to my wife that it appeared she walked just fine without the cane. At times I thought she was using it as a mental "crutch" that was no longer needed.

About 10 years ago, my wife began to have back problems that were distressing and at times debilitating, or so she said. She went to doctors who specialized in back problems as well as chiropractors, none of whom could fix her problem. She had cortisone injections but they didn't help. We bought two expensive mattresses to no avail. She looked OK and I sometimes wondered if she was just putting on and complaining. How's that for compassion?

I'm a very active person who works out several times per week and include several difficult exercises to strengthen back muscles. I frequently ride a bicycle long distances and hike in the deserts and mountains. A dreaded back problem would never happen to me, I said!

Enter. God's sense of humor. A couple months ago my wife suggested we sleep in another bedroom that had one of the other expensive mattresses we bought to solve her back problem. She wanted to see if things

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Tyndale College

British baroness keynote speaker at scholarship dinner feting lawmaker

Baroness Caroline Cox, Nobel Peace prize nominee for her work with the oppressed world, spoke at Tyndale College's annual scholarship dinner.

BY MARY RODRIQUE
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U.S. Rep. Joe Knollenberg, R-Michigan, received the Bartlett Hess Lifetime Achievement Award during the annual Scholarship Dinner for Farmington Hills' William Tyndale College last Thursday.

Knollenberg, whose 11th Congressional District includes the Farmington area, was instrumental in securing a \$1.5 million federal grant for a major expansion of the college, on 12 Mile Road west of Drake. The award is named for the late Dr. Bartlett Hess, pastor emeritus of Ward Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

"I am truly humbled by your warmth," Knollenberg told the gathering of 700 supporters at the Laurel Manor banquet hall in Livonia.

The annual dinner supports the scholarship fund, which last year awarded more than \$500,000 to students at the small, Christian liberal arts college.

"This is a momentous occasion for me. Maybe one of the most special moments in my Congressional career - representing people, Cox was made a member of the British House of Lords by former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. She joined the Tyndale College Board of Trustees after speaking at commencement exercises two years ago.

Keynote speaker for the evening was Baroness Caroline Cox, a nurse, social worker and tireless worker for oppressed people. Cox was made a member of the British House of Lords by former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. She joined the Tyndale College Board of Trustees after speaking at commencement exercises two years ago.

Humanitarian treks

Cox, president of Christian Solidarity Worldwide, has won numerous awards and was a Nobel Peace Prize nominee. She has made countless humanitarian treks to places such as the Sudan in Africa and Nagorno-Karabakh, a besieged Armenian enclave in the former Soviet Union. She was personally responsible for delivering more than 300 truckloads of medical supplies to



U.S. Rep. Joe Knollenberg

Poland before it gained its independence. For that, she was recognized with the Commander Cross of the Order of Merit, the highest honor given to a foreigner by the Polish government.

College President Dr. James McMann noted that Cox is helping to develop the Caroline Cox Center for Human Rights at Tyndale College. "She models to us our highest ideals," said McMann.

Cox invited guests to "travel with me in imagination. Celebrate the courage, dignity and faith of the persecuted. We could go to so many areas - India, Indonesia, the Spice Islands, China, Vietnam, North Korea - there is so much suffering the world. Victims of oppression everywhere."

She said that although she's "not fond of politics at all, it's a wonderful opportunity to be a voice for the voiceless."

"Many people we visit are trapped behind closed borders. Our advocacy with Christian Solidarity Worldwide is gained through firsthand knowledge. We have accountability. That's who we are."

Cox presented a slide show. The first set of images was taken in Sudan, where a militant Islamic regime has declared a jihad or "holy war" against the Christian minority.

"The government doesn't like us going there because we'll tell the world what's going on," she said.

On clandestine missions, Cox and her supporters bring in medical supplies, food and clothing, traveling by



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BASSLER

Speaker:
 Baroness Caroline Cox, above, an internationally acclaimed human rights advocate, addresses the crowd, left, at Laurel Manor.



plane and landing on abandoned airstrips. "Often all we see is smoke, burning villages."

Christian slaves

One picture showed a naked blind mother with her young son in the final stages of malnutrition. Another showed a friendly Muslim returning a caravan of Christian slaves, mostly women and children, to their village.

"These people still smile despite their persecution and slavery," she said.

In the Armenian enclave, Cox showed images from several trips in the early 1990s, flights on large Russian cargo planes that had to fly through hostile airspace. Low flying helicopters were also employed, flying below the depth of heat seeking missiles. Those, however, were also vulnerable.

"Seventeen pilots gave their lives," Cox said.

She described how hundreds of mis-

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Baroness Caroline Cox
 Christian Solidarity Worldwide

siles kept pounding the little Armenian village day after day.

"Their electricity was cut off day after day, week after week. The hospital had no antibiotics, no painkillers."

She had a picture of a woman who had both her legs amputated without painkillers. Cox was instrumental in getting the British government to donate hard drugs and also started collecting artificial limbs.

"There is now a ceasefire, but it's tenuous," she said.

"Equipping students spiritually and intellectually to protect human rights and freedom is essential," she added.

Alternative spring break: helping Habitat

BY ANDREA BAKER
 SPECIAL WRITER

From April 15 to 18, I was privileged to join eight other students from Mercy High School, who, like me, opted to explore an alternative to senior trips to Tampa and cruises in the Caribbean on spring break.

Along with seniors Margaret Deady, Julie Jacques, Cristina Marra, Margaret Prest, Mary Reedy, Rachel Warbelow, Lauren Yagiela and Mariessa Zavala, as well as chaperone Arpa Dhake, a counselor at Mercy, I took part in an unforgettable experience in Beattyville, Ky.

From its beginnings, our trek southward taught us about service. The generous donations from Mercy's Dad's Club and Student Council clearly indicated our community's dedication to serve before we even began. However, it was only hours into our drive when a person's kindness would help get us to Beattyville.

After lunch at Wendy's, we discovered that the lights had been left on in one of the vehicles, draining its battery. Inexperienced in solving such a dilemma, we were dependent on the charity of others. We were impressed by the number of people who stopped to make sure we could continue safely.

Once we arrived in Kentucky, we continued to be amazed by the thoughtfulness of the people around us, when the town invited us to dinner Monday night. Little did we know that those would teach us so much about service even before we started to work on homes.



Repair: Mercy students spruce up a home. Margaret Prest (left), Lauren Yagiela, Julie Jacques, Christina Marra and Charlie, a Habitat for Humanity worker in Kentucky.

While on the job, our tasks included bleaching the exteriors of two homes, putting up a gutter and leveling the yard of one home so that water would flow away from its walls. Though we had come to Kentucky expecting more intense physical labor, these tasks required us to serve each other in order to get the tasks done. We were forced to trust each other while we climbed

ladders 15 feet above the ground onto rooftops, hoping that those holding the ladders were supporting us. We used everyone's coordination to level and drill in the gutters and the strength of a crew in sync with one another to fill and unload a pickup truck full of dirt.

Over our four-day trip we learned what it meant to live in true community with other human beings. Experi-

encing the give and take of living in close quarters with other people, with different ways of operating, showed us this on a basic level. Witnessing the devoted employees and volunteers of Habitat for Humanity allowed us to see obligation to community on a greater level.

Fellow Mercy senior Margaret Prest contributed to this report.



Digging dirt: Julie Jacques, foreground, with Margaret Prest, Andrea Baker, Lauren Yagiela and chaperone Arpa Dhake in Kentucky where they spent spring break working with Habitat for Humanity.

Farmington Chorus spring concert May 11-12

The Farmington Community Chorus will present its annual spring concert, Tune That Name, on Friday and Saturday, May 11 and 12, at Farmington High School, 5 p.m.

Kelly Garver Nieto, former Miss Michigan and runnerup to Miss Ameri-

ca, will be special guest playing her country fiddle with the chorus.

Talent winner

A former Miss Farmington, she was the Miss America Talent Winner the year she competed.

She has performed with Garth Brooks, Willie Nelson, Marie Osmond, the Judds and other country greats. For tickets or more information, call Harry Doerr at 248-788-5332.

Cost in advance is \$10 for adults, \$8 for students and seniors. Tickets will

be \$12 at the door.

Steve Segraves is chorus director. Susan Garr is accompanist.

Farmington High is on Shiawassee, just west of Orchard Lake Road.

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